image

30 JUNE

$1.95

$2.70 CANADA

THE MASK

image COMICS PRESENTS:

story & art
SAM KIETH & DAVE FEISS

finishes
JIM SINCLAIR

lettering
KELL-O-GRAPHICS

color
STEVE OLIFF and **OLYOPTICS**

logo
CHANCE WOLF

film output
TONY KELLY and **KELL-O-GRAPHICS**

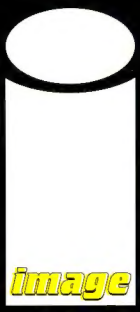
OLYOPTICS:
Tracey Anderson, Stacy Cox, Michael "Jerm" Jeremiah, Patti Stratton Jordan, Quinn Supplee.

FOR IMAGE COMICS

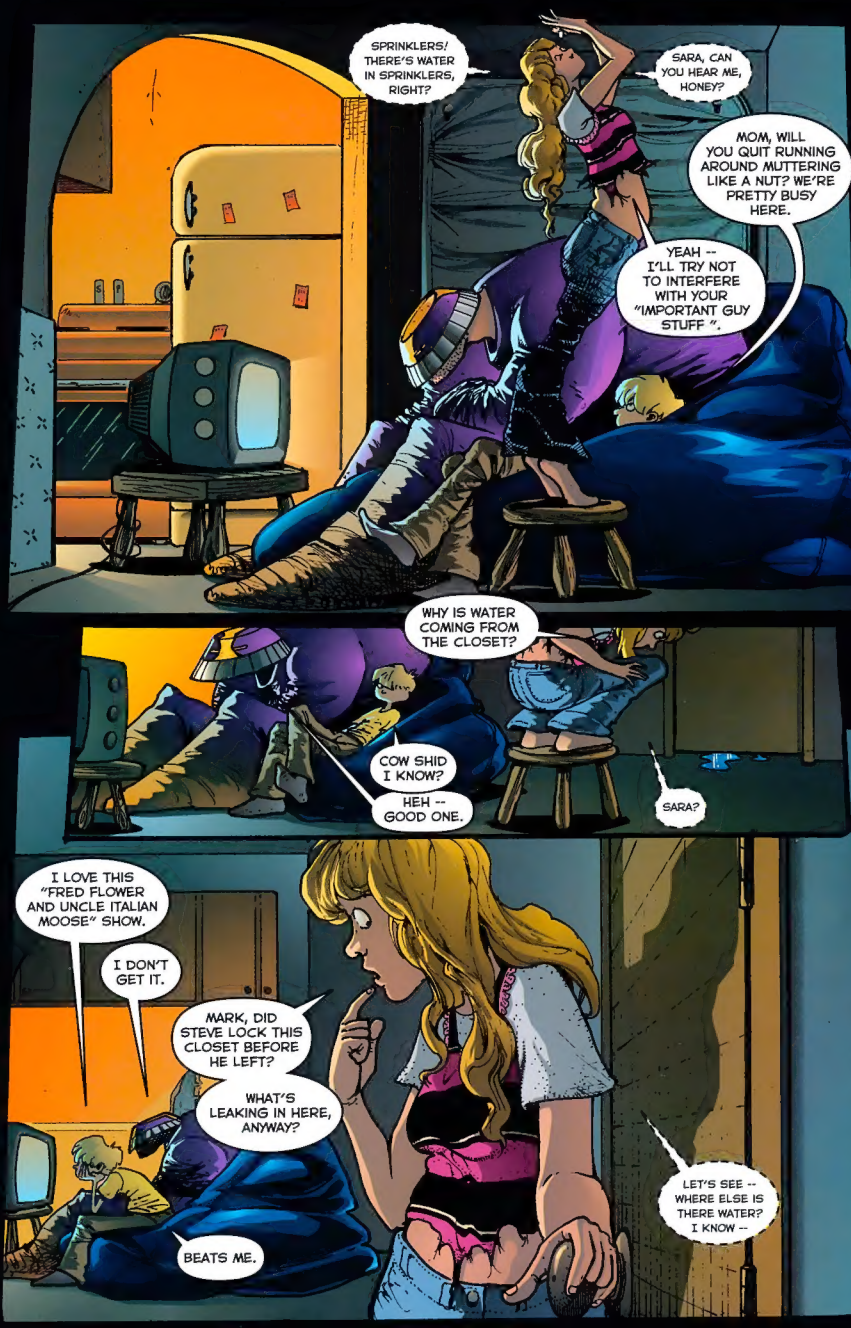
Executive Director: LARRY MARDER
Art Director: DOUG GRIFFITH
Production Manager: RONNA VLADIC
Graphic Design: KENNY FELIX
Communications Director: BRENT BRAUN
Accounting Administrator: LEE PATIN
Director of Sales: BOB MATSON

MAXX #30. MAY 1997. FIRST PRINTING. An Image Comics Title published by Image Comics, 1440 N. Harbor Blvd, #305 Fullerton, CA 92635. Entire contents ™ and © 1997 Sam Kieth, all rights reserved. Any similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Sam Kieth. Eye patch, what eye patch. Send correspondence to: Sam Kieth, 4363 Hazel Avenue, Suite 1-285, Fair Oaks, California, 95628. (nghtime@aol.com). Publishers and creator assume no responsibility for unsolicited materials or classified ads.

PRINTED IN CANADA.



SARA?
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GONNA FIND HER IN *THERE!*
UH... RIGHT, I MUST LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT.
I FEEL LIKE AN IDIOT, WEARING THIS STUPID OUTFIT. AT LEAST WHEN I WAS PART RABBIT, THE MASK WAS PART OF MY FACE.
NOW THAT I'M A MAN, I'M JUST A DORK WITH A LAMPSHADE.
I THINK IT'S CUTE.
DAVE, COME HERE -- YOU'RE GONNA MISS IT!


SPRINKLERS/ THERE'S WATER IN SPRINKLERS, RIGHT?
SARA, CAN YOU HEAR ME, HONEY?
MOM, WILL YOU QUIT RUNNING AROUND MUTTERING LIKE A NUT? WE'RE PRETTY BUSY HERE.
YEAH -- I'LL TRY NOT TO INTERFERE WITH YOUR "IMPORTANT GUY STUFF".
WHY IS WATER COMING FROM THE CLOSET?
COW SHID I KNOW?
HEH -- GOOD ONE.
SARA?
I LOVE THIS "FRED FLOWER AND UNCLE ITALIAN MOOSE" SHOW.
I DON'T GET IT.
MARK, DID STEVE LOCK THIS CLOSET BEFORE HE LEFT?
WHAT'S LEAKING IN HERE, ANYWAY?
BEATS ME.
LET'S SEE -- WHERE ELSE IS THERE WATER? I KNOW --

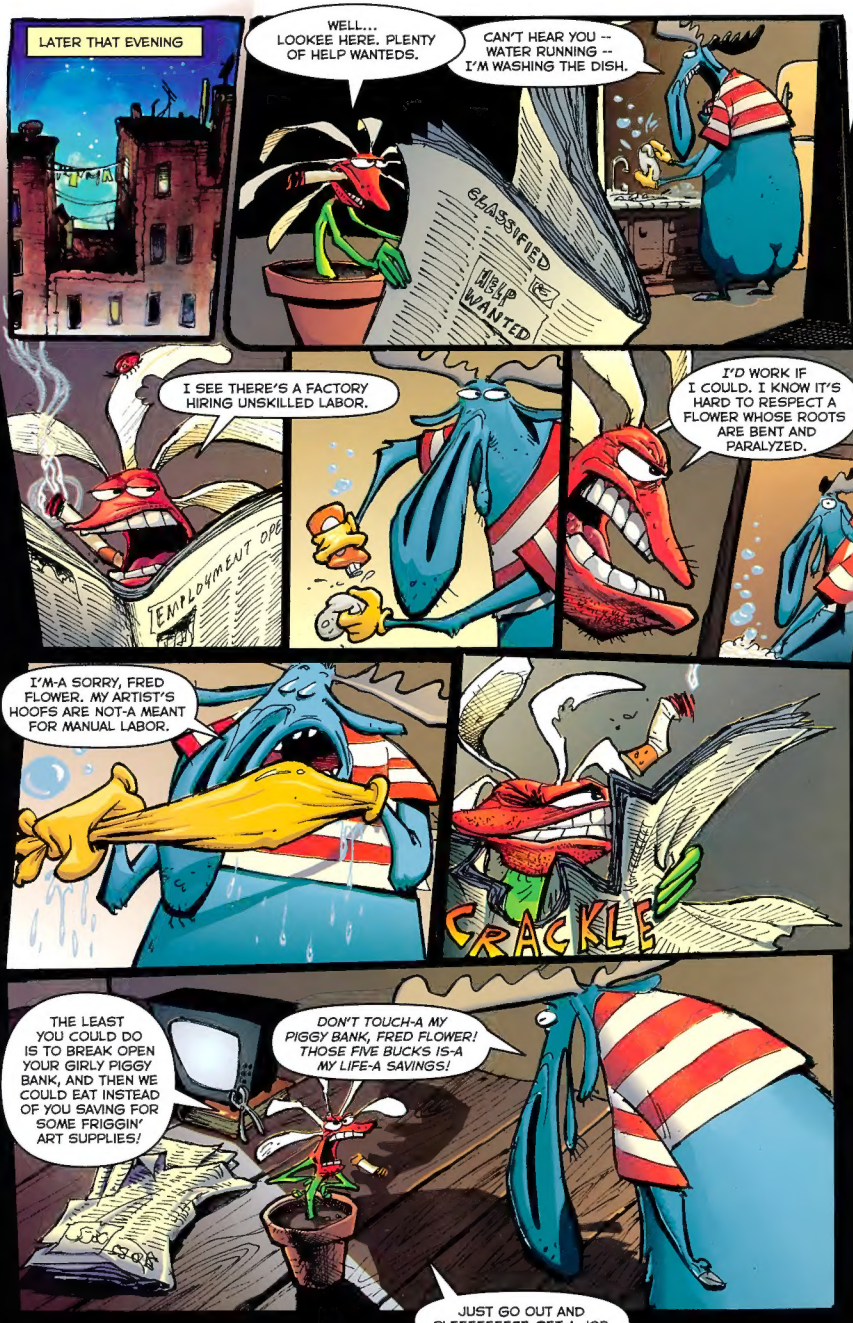
DON'T WORRY, HONEY -- DADDY LOST YOU, BUT WE'LL GET YOU BACK.
SARA... ARE YOU THERE?
THIS IS NUTS. I CAN'T KEEP TALKING TO TOILETS AND FAUCETS THE REST OF MY LIFE. THIS IS EITHER GRIEF, OR SARA'S NOT DEAD, OR GONE'S PLAYING MIND GAMES WITH ME.
PEOPLE DON'T COME BACK FROM THE AFTERLIFE AS TALKING WATER. *RUNNING* WATER, MAYBE -- WELL, AT LEAST I HAVEN'T LOST MY SENSE OF HUMOR...
MEANWHILE, MARK AND MAXX BLISSFULLY WATCH THE BOOB TOOB, WHILE I RIDE THE CHOO CHOO TO BONKERSVILLE.
GOD, THIS SHOW IS STUPID. WHY DOES THAT MOOSE STAY WITH THAT FLOWER GUY, ANYWAY?
OH, WELL -- AT LEAST MARK'S BONDING WITH *SOMEONE*...
FRED FLOWER AND UNCLE ITALIAN MOOSE SHOW
"UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S THE TV..."
And now let's join Uncle Italian Moose and Fred Flower...

OK, LET'S SEE. NINE MONTHS BEHIND ON RENT...
GAS TURNED OFF.
SIX-FOOT MOOSE THAT WON'T WORK.
NO FOOD AND DOWN TO MY LAST PACK OF CIGARETTES,
AND THE ONLY THING KEEPING US WARM IS THE GLOW OF THIS CRAPPY TV.
YET THE WARM-A GLOW OF THE TV ECHOES THE WARM-A GLOW OF OUR FRIENDSHIP.
YEAH AND WE'D BE WARMED BY SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE SPANISH CHANNEL IF YOU HADN'T BROKEN THE STUPID KNOB.
BUT I LIKE-A THE SPANISH CHANNEL. "SABADO GIGANTE"... NOW THAT'S-A SHOW!
BUT YOU DON'T SPEAK SPANISH.
IS-A THAT-A CRIME?

FLOWER WOULDN'T BE MINDIN' A BEER RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
OK, WE'RE PLAYING *THIS* GAME -- MAKE THE FLOWER GET HIS OWN BEER...
OK, I'LL GET MY *OWN* BEER.
THUMP!
NO, NO -- DON'T GET UP... UNGH... MAN, THIS POT'S HEAVY!
GOD, THE PAIN!!!
OK-A, FRED FLOWER, I'LL-A GET IT.
NO, NO -- YOU STAY WARM IN FRONT OF THE TV.
I THINK-A FRED FLOWER CAN-A MOVE PRETTY FAST WHEN HE WANNA.
YOU THINK I'M FAKIN'?!? 'CAUSE IF YOU THINK I'M FAKIN' --
KNOCK KNOCK KN
IT'S-A EMPTY. YOU AND THE NUN DRANK 'EM ALL A-LAST-A NIGHT.
OH YEAH. I FORGOT. GREAT -- WHO'S AT THE DOOR?

I BET IT'S-A YOUR FRIEND, REGINA.
MENTION IT, AND YER A DEAD MOOSE.
♪ SHE'S GOT AN EYE PATCH... SHE'S GOT AN EYE... ♪
HI REGINA -- NICE HAIR.
HEY, MOOSE. LIKE MY NEW BLACK EYE PATCH?
WHAT EYE PATCH?
OKAY...
HEY! I'VE GOT TWO TICKETS TO WRESTLING TONIGHT. IF FRED'S NOT HERE, YOU WANNA GO?
THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP
WRESTLING? I'M THERE!
HEY BABE -- WE GOT A COUPLA HOURS BEFORE THE FIRST BOUT. HAVE A SEAT.
SURE.
WHUMP
I TELL YA, REG -- SOMETIMES I DON'T KNOW WHY I PUT UP WITH THAT BLUE MOOSE.
WHY DO YOU GUYS STAY TOGETHER, ANYWAY?
I CAN'T LOSE THE GUY. I MADE ONE MISTAKE.
I SAVED HIS BUTT IN DESERT STORM. NOW MR. ANTLERS THINKS HE OWES ME HIS LIFE.
BOOM
RAT RAT RAT RAT

WOW! NO WONDER YOU'RE BUDS. WAS HE WITH THE ITALIAN TROOPS?
NO, MOOSE TROOPS.
FRED, DO YOU KNOW A TOBACCO-CHEWING NUN'S SITTING NEXT TO YOU?
FRED, DO YOU REALIZE A ONE-EYED GIRL IN FLANNEL'S SITTING NEXT TO YOU?
REG, SISTER MURRY. SISTER MURRY, REG.
SPIT TOOIE
NICE TO MEET YA.
HEY.
I HEAR YOU PROMISED NOT TO GUILT TRIP THE MOOSE INTO GOING BACK TO WORK.
UH...
YOU GONNA LET HIM BE AN ARTIST? RIGHT.
WIPE WIPE
ER...
♪♪ THERE'RE TIMES IN A WOMAN'S LIFE OF TRANDESCENTIAL BEAUTY. ♪♪
THAT'S-A RIGHT. YOU PROMISED-A, FRED FLOWER. SOMEDAY, I'LL-A BE SO FAMOUS, WE'LL LIVE IN...
...LUXURY'S LAP!
WUMP!
SPLAT
SHE'S... INTERESTING...
♪♪ LOOK AT ME, I'M AS HELPLESS AS A KITTEN... ♪♪
SIGH SOMEBODY SHOOT ME.


LATER THAT EVENING
WELL... LOOKEE HERE. PLENTY OF HELP WANTEDS.
CAN'T HEAR YOU -- WATER RUNNING -- I'M WASHING THE DISH.
CLASSIFIED
HELP WANTED
I SEE THERE'S A FACTORY HIRING UNSKILLED LABOR.
EMPLOYMENT OPP
I'D WORK IF I COULD. I KNOW IT'S HARD TO RESPECT A FLOWER WHOSE ROOTS ARE BENT AND PARALYZED.
I'M-A SORRY, FRED FLOWER. MY ARTIST'S HOOFS ARE NOT-A MEANT FOR MANUAL LABOR.
CRACKLE
THE LEAST YOU COULD DO IS TO BREAK OPEN YOUR GIRLY PIGGY BANK, AND THEN WE COULD EAT INSTEAD OF YOU SAVING FOR SOME FRIGGIN' ART SUPPLIES!
DON'T TOUCH-A MY PIGGY BANK, FRED FLOWER! THOSE FIVE BUCKS IS-A MY LIFE-A SAVINGS!
JUST GO OUT AND PLEEEEEEEZE GET A JOB.

I'M A CARICATURIST -- THAT'S-A MY JOB.
EVERYBODY DRAWS A BIG-A HEAD AN' A LEETLE BODY. BUT I'M-A ORIGINAL.
I DRAW LEETLE HEADS WITH BIG-A BODIES.
YEAH -- THAT'S ORIGINAL ALRIGHT.
WHAT KIND OF IDIOT ARE YOU? MY HEAD'S SO SMALL YOU'VE MADE MY WIFE CRY!
THAT'LL BE FIVE-A BUCKS-A, PLEASE.
THE WORLD IS NOT READY FOR AN ARTIST LIKE UNCLE ITALIAN MOOSE.
ART SUPPLIES
GIVE
CRUMPLE
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
HOW CAN YOU-A SAY THAT, FRED FLOWER?
OK, THE WORLD'S READY.
YOU MOCK-A ME, FRED FLOWER. I WOULD-A GO BACK TO WORK -- BUT I-A CAN'T. MAYBE YOU COULD GET A JOB THAT DOESN'T NEED-A LEGS.
YEAH, LIKE A DOORSTOP.
IT'S A JOB.

OK -- I CAN SEE WHAT'S GONNA HAVE TO HAPPEN *HERE.*
WHUMP
:SIGH:
FINE! I'M GONNA HAVE TO *KILL* MYSELF, DRAGGIN' *MY* POT ALL OVER TOWN LOOKIN' FOR WORK, JUST TO PROTECT YOUR GIRLY *HOOVES!*
:CHOKE: BUT I DON'T MIND... I MEAN, I KNOW YOU'D DO THE SAME FOR ME, RIGHT? :COUGH:
I'M A BAD-A MOOSE, FRED FLOWER. I'M GOING TO MOOSE-A HELL.
OK, YOU-A WIN. I'LL-A WORK-A MY HOOFS TO THE BONE.
BUT YOU'VE-A STRAINED THE BONDS OF-A OUR FRIENDSHIP, FRED-A FLOWER. THIS IS A MISTAKE! THIS DAY WILL *HAUNT*-A YOU!
HAUNT MY BUTT.
SLAM!

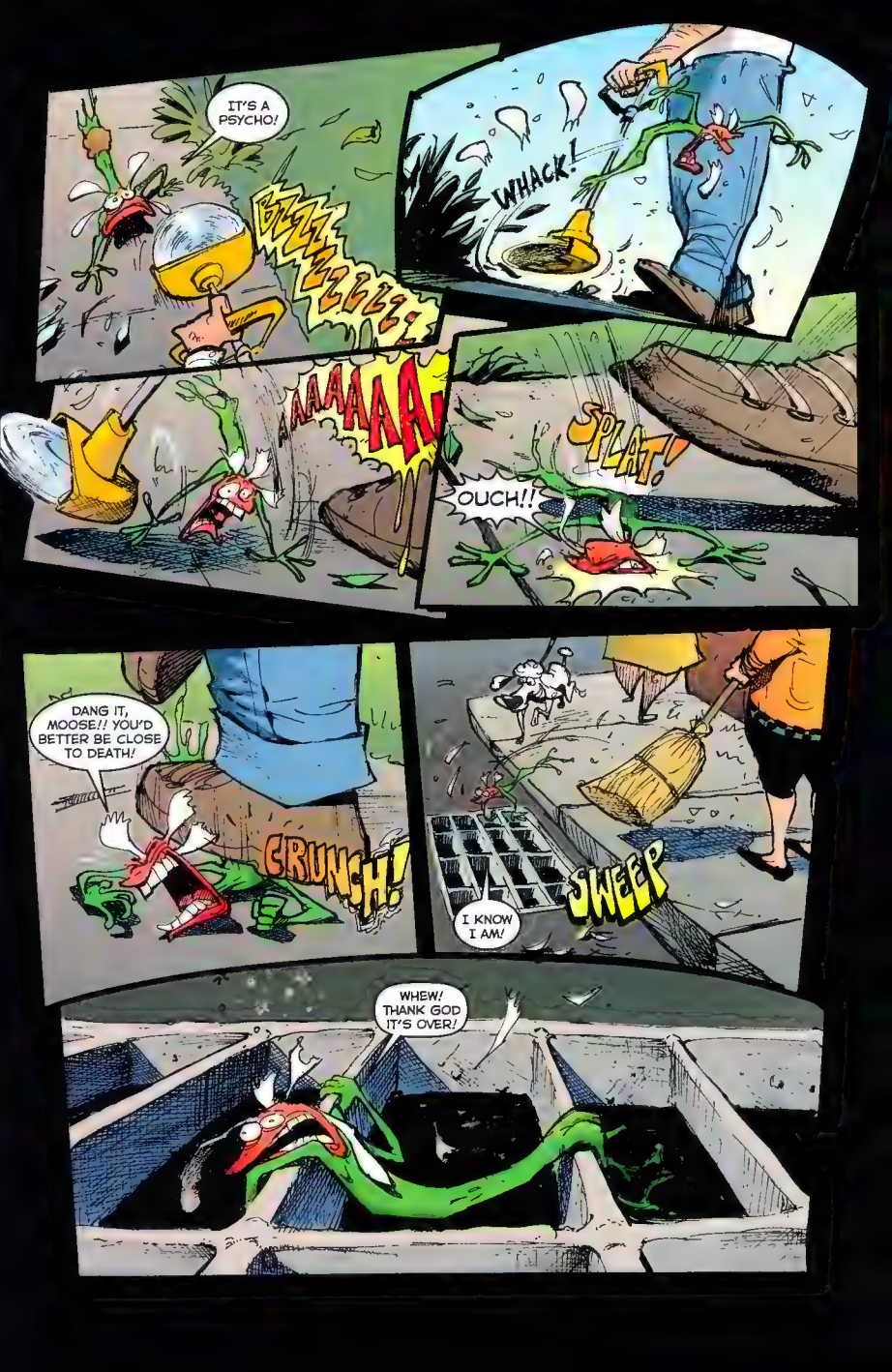
HEY, FRED, WHERE'S UNCLE MOOSE?
UNCLE ITALIAN MOOSE. HE'S AT THE FACTORY.
WHAT?!? BUT YOU PROMISED!!!
BACK OFF, BABE. YOU WANNA PAY OUR BILLS?
WHAT ABOUT HIS DREAMS?
CHUNG!
HE CAN DREAM AFTER WORK LIKE THE REST OF US.
NOW LISTEN UP. ASSEMBLE ALL SIX PARTS IN 1.2 SECONDS, THEN PULL BACK BEFORE THE METAL SHAFT SLAMS DOWN. THE SECRET IS RHYTHM. IF ANYTHING THROWS OFF YOUR TIMING...
CHUNK
...YOU WON'T BE PLAYING PIANO ANY MORE.

KA-
CHUNK
KA-
CHUNK
AH..
KA-
CHUNK
CHOO!
EEP
HOLY MOTHER OF GOD...
CAUTION
CAUTION
CALL THE AMBULANCE, MORT -- WE GOT ANOTHER ONE...

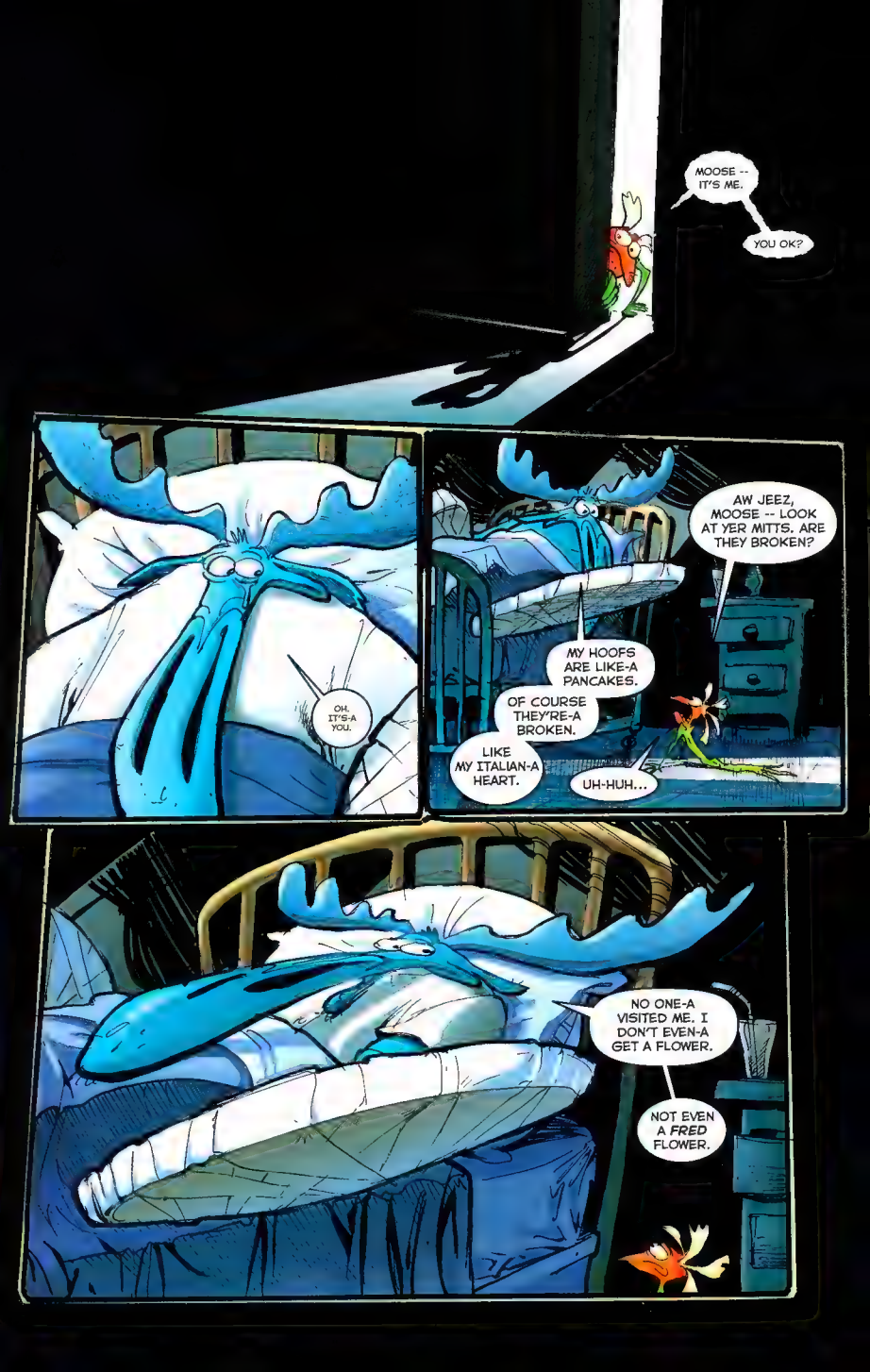
RAISE YA SIX.
OK, I'M IN. HOW 'BOUT YOU, SISTER? SHOOT -- THE PHONE.
♪ I WRITE THE SONGS THAT MAKE THE YOUNG GIRLS CRY. ♪
JUST A SECOND, GALS.
BOP BOP BOP
SPIT!
YES? THIS IS FRED FLOWER.
HOSPITAL?
THAT'S RIGHT, A FREAK ACCIDENT. IT'S YOUR ROOMMATE'S HOOVES.
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
MOOSE, UNCLE ITALIAN

THOSE CHICKS'LL BLAME *ME* -- I KNOW IT!
OK -- EVERYBODY OUT! GAME'S OVER!!! YOU LOSE!!!
FRED! WHAT'S THE DEAL?!?
UH -- THEY NEED MY ADVICE AT THE HOSPITAL. GOTTA GO!
WHOA!!!
GRE-A-A-T! NOW WHAT'LL I DO!?! EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO...

...ME.
GET WELL!
:SNIFF:
MAAANN, THIS HURTS!
RAW EXPOSED ROOTS.
AAAHHH!!!
HOPE HE'S OK. IF HE'S NOT... I'LL KILL 'IM!
LORD, NO.


IT'S A PSYCHO!
BZZZZZZZ!
WHACK!
AAAAAAA!
OUCH!!
SPLAT!
DANG IT, MOOSE!! YOU'D BETTER BE CLOSE TO DEATH!
CRUNCH!
I KNOW I AM!
SWEEP
WHEW! THANK GOD IT'S OVER!

PEEEEE...
PEE. I LOVE PEE.
YOUR FRIEND NEVER SHOWED, HUH? SORRY.
WELL, GOOD NIGHT, MR. NORWEGIAN ELK.
THAT'S-A UNCLE ITALIAN MOOSE.
OOOOOOKLAHOMA, WHERE THE WIND COMES WHIPPIN' ;PANT PANT; DOWN THE PLAINS...
AMBULANCE
HOSPITAL
GREAT, NOW I'M SISTER MURRY.
HOME STRETCH, FRED ;GASP; -- HANG IN THERE!
SAID, HANG IN THERE.
OH.
HOW'S THAT?
ELEVEN


MOOSE -- IT'S ME.
YOU OK?
OH. IT'S-A YOU.
AW JEEZ, MOOSE -- LOOK AT YER MITTS. ARE THEY BROKEN?
MY HOOFS ARE LIKE-A PANCAKES.
OF COURSE THEY'RE-A BROKEN.
LIKE MY ITALIAN-A HEART.
UH-HUH...
NO ONE-A VISITED ME. I DON'T EVEN-A GET A FLOWER.
NOT EVEN A *FRED* FLOWER.

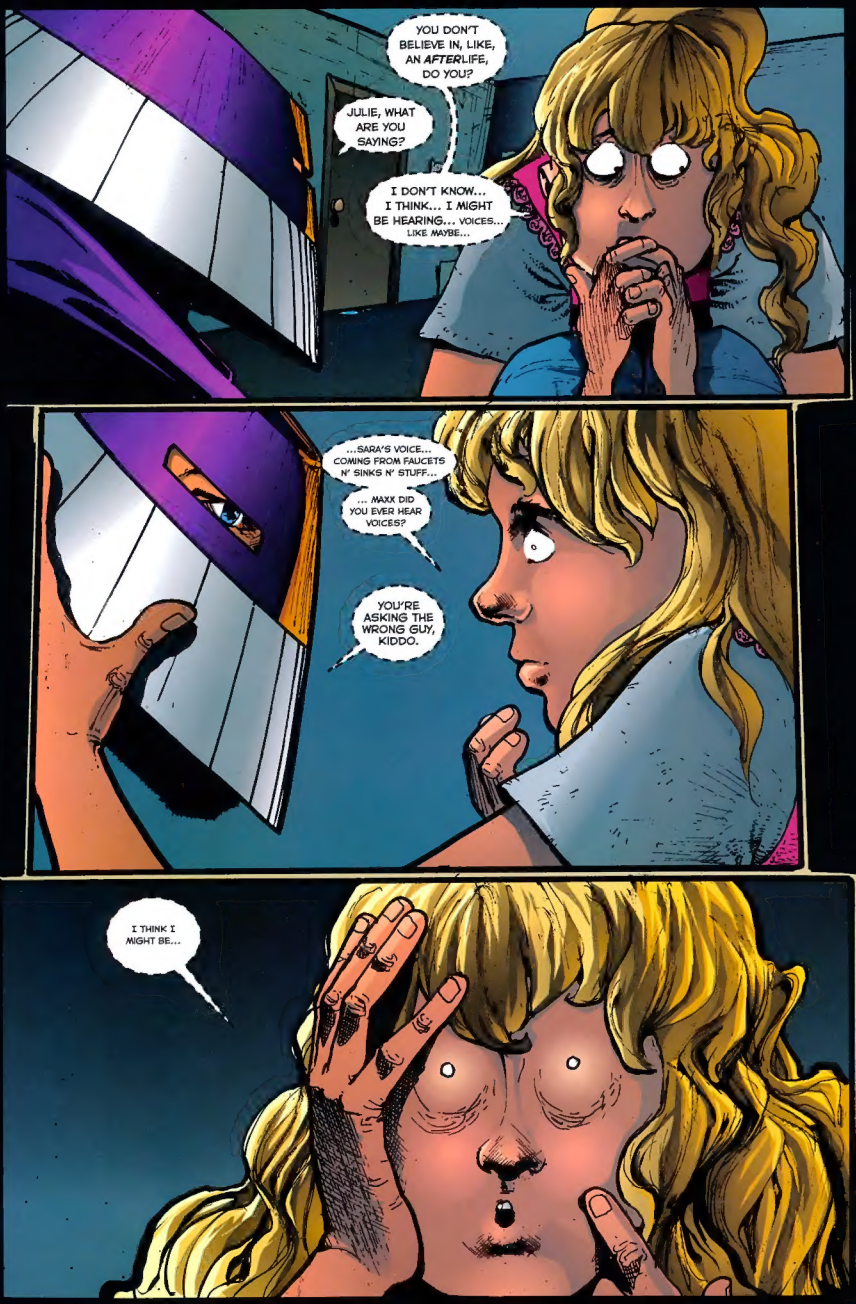
I CAN'T BELIEVE I BUSTED MY POT GETTING HERE, AND YOU DON'T EVEN CARE!
IT'S YOUR OWN-A FAULT, FRED FLOWER. YOU BROKE-A YOUR PROMISE. YOU MAKE-A ME WORK, AND I SQUISH-A MY HOOFS.
DON'T MOVE! I'M GONNA CRAWL UP THERE AND BEAT THE LIVING CRAP OUT OF YOU!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I WENT THROUGH FOR YOU!
EVER LOST A PETAL TO A WEED EATER?
IT HURTS, PAL!
I'M HURTIN' HERE!
WHY SHOULD I APOLOGIZE TO-A YOU?
BUT, UH, I ACCEPT YOUR APOLOGY. JUST GIVE ME A PIGGYBACK RIDE, AND LET'S BLOW THIS JOINT.
NOW WE-A EVEN. BECAUSE OF-A YOU, I'VE DRAWN MY LAST-A TEENY HEAD. YOU NOT-A MY FRIEND, FRED FLOWER!
GET-A OUT!

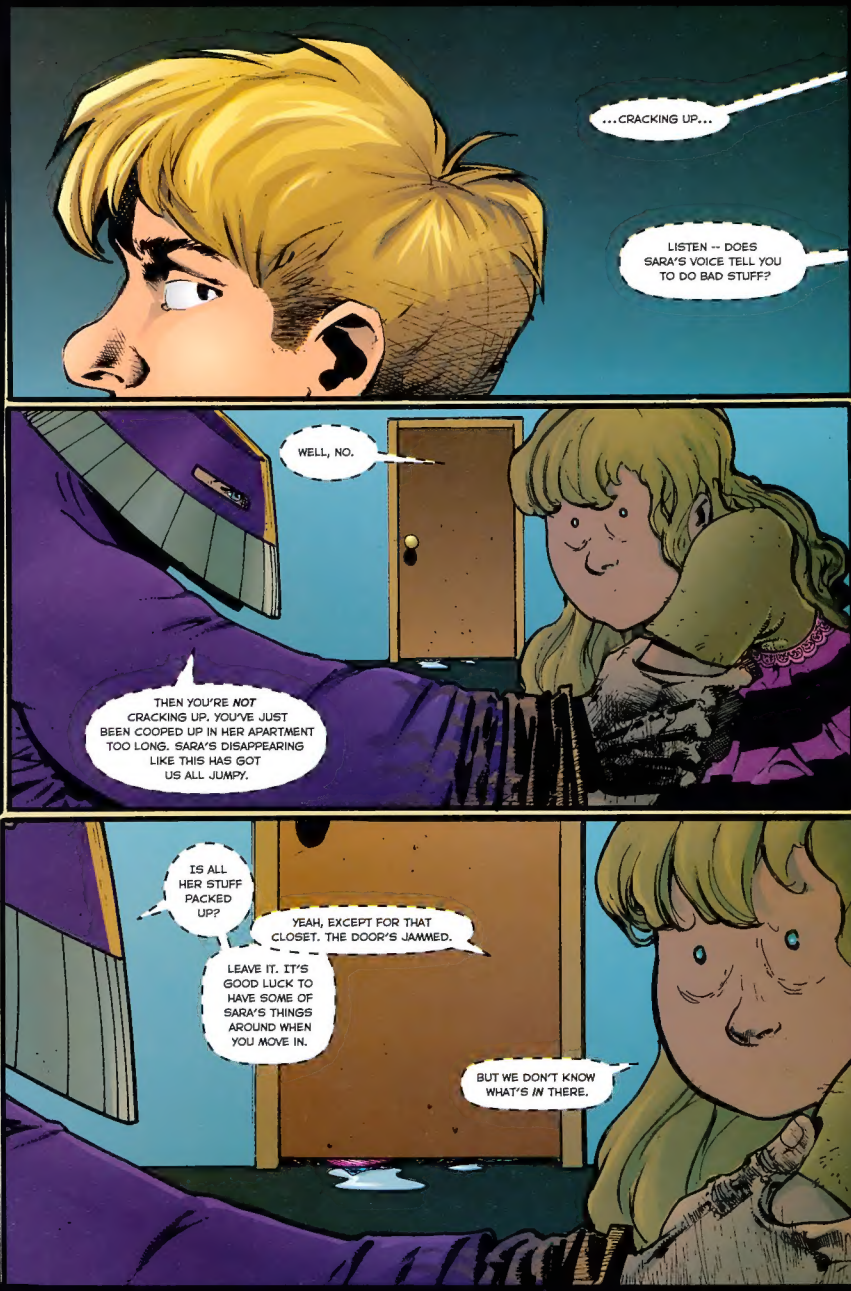
A-LATER
HEY, MOOSE. YOU BACK FROM THE HOSPITAL YET?
HELLO? YOU HOME? TAKIN' A DUMP?
GUESS NOT.
MAYBE HE MOVED OUT...
HE'S GONE. I FINALLY PUSHED HIM TOO FAR. HE'S LEFT FOR GOOD.
HEY! I SHOULD BE HAPPY! SCREW ROOMMATES! I'M A BACHELOR NOW -- CHICKS N' PIZZA EVERY NIGHT!
AND NO MORE MOOSE!!!!!
AWWW, I'M KIDDIN' MYSELF. THAT MOOSE IS THE CLOSEST THING TO A FRIEND I'VE GOT. WELL, THERE'S REGINA AND THE NUN... BUT THEY'RE CHICKS...
MOOSE, IF YOU'D JUST COME BACK, THIS FLOWER WOULD CHANGE.
I'D BE A BETTER FLOWER...
... A BETTER FRED.

I GOT LOVE, MOOSE, RIGHT HERE IN MY HEART. I'M SORRY.
SPAGHET
I'M-A HOOOOME!!!
ER... HOW LONG YOU BEEN STANDIN' THERE?
YOU SPENT YOUR PIGGYBANK MONEY ON GROCERIES!?!
THAT'S IT ?!?!? TWO BAGS OF GROCERIES? WE COULD'VE SETTLED FOR...
JUST GOT-A HOME.
DIDN'T-A HAVE TO. MY WORKERS-A COMP MONEY GAVE-A ME THESE!
I WAS-A HUNGRY...

THAT'S-A IT!!! I-A SCREWED UP AGAIN! MY CAREER IS-A OVER. NO MORE-A DREAMIN' FOR ME. BACK-A TO THE FACTORY!
PLOP
PLOP!
WELL, GUESS THIS IS WHERE YOU EXPECT ME TO "GO GIRLY" ON YA AND APOLOGIZE. WELL, FORGET IT!
I LOVE-A YOU TOO, FRED-A FLOWER.
BIENVENIDOS A SABADO GIGANTE!
SABADO GIGANTE... NOW *THERE'S* A SHOW.
THE END

SO THAT'S IT? WHAT A LAME SHOW! THE MOOSE HAS TO GO BACK TO WORK AND FORGO HIS DREAMS, AND THE FLOWER CONTINUES TO BADGER HIM? THEY'RE NO BETTER OFF THAN BEFORE!
I LIKE IT. IT REMINDS ME OF YOU AND MOM.
EXCEPT I'M THE MOOSE.
NO, I'M THE MOOSE.
FRED FLOWER AND UNCLE ITALIAN MOOSE SHOW
LISTEN, MAXX. WE GOTTA TALK. SOMETHING'S HAPPENING.
YEAH -- YOUR SECOND CHANCE. YOU SHOULD STAY HERE IN SARA'S PLACE. STEVE PAID THE RENT FOR THREE MONTHS. IT'D GET YOU OFF THE STREETS.
SHH. KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN -- I DON'T WANT MARK TO HEAR THIS. WHAT I MEAN IS, I THINK I'M HAVING SOME PROBLEMS. EITHER I'M GOING NUTS, OR THE WORLD IS.
OK, GO ON...


YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN, LIKE, AN *AFTER*LIFE, DO YOU?
JULIE, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
I DON'T KNOW... I THINK... I MIGHT BE HEARING... VOICES... LIKE MAYBE...
...SARA'S VOICE... COMING FROM FAUCETS N' SINKS N' STUFF...
... MAXX DID YOU EVER HEAR VOICES?
YOU'RE ASKING THE WRONG GUY, KIDDO.
I THINK I MIGHT BE...


...CRACKING UP...
LISTEN -- DOES SARA'S VOICE TELL YOU TO DO BAD STUFF?
WELL, NO.
THEN YOU'RE *NOT* CRACKING UP. YOU'VE JUST BEEN COOPED UP IN HER APARTMENT TOO LONG. SARA'S DISAPPEARING LIKE THIS HAS GOT US ALL JUMPY.
IS ALL HER STUFF PACKED UP?
YEAH, EXCEPT FOR THAT CLOSET. THE DOOR'S JAMMED.
LEAVE IT. IT'S GOOD LUCK TO HAVE SOME OF SARA'S THINGS AROUND WHEN YOU MOVE IN.
BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S *IN* THERE.

WELL, WHATEVER IT IS...
...HOW BAD COULD IT BE?...
MEEP!